

December 4, 2002

TEXAS DECLARATION FOR HEALTH

To fully enjoy the benefits of a prosperous and growing state, Texans and their communities must be healthy. Disparities in health among the people of Texas are not acceptable. The public health system must be effective and efficient in preventing disease and protecting all Texans from health threats.

We, the organizations affixing our signatures to this declaration, represent the length and breadth of Texas. We believe the public health system is the cornerstone of our state's health care system. We believe that the public health system can and must be improved to better meet the needs of all Texans.

Recognizing that "public health" includes all the activities that society undertakes to assure the conditions in which people can be healthy, and that health improvement depends on the actions of individuals, communities, and public and private partners, we, the undersigned, pledge to work together and share responsibility and accountability for creating a healthier Texas by the year 2010.

~~We~~ must promote healthy eating and safe physical activity.

~~We~~ must reduce the disease, disability, and premature death that result from tobacco use, risky sexual behavior, substance abuse, and violence.

~~We~~ must promote mental health and individual and community social connections to improve prevention, early detection, and treatment of mental disorders.

~~We~~ must increase the rates of high school graduation, adult literacy, college attendance, and other advanced education and training to improve socioeconomic and health status.

~~We~~ must reduce health threats caused by environmental and consumer hazards.

~~We~~ must take steps to reduce infectious diseases by raising rates of timely immunizations for children and adults.

~~We~~ must change state statutes and local policies to ensure that essential public health services are available for all Texans.

~~We~~ must build a system of collaborative partners to provide necessary public health services.

~~We~~ must inform every community in Texas of the function, purpose, and availability of the state's public health system.

~~We~~ must train the workforce of the public health system to meet evolving public health needs.

~~We~~ must create a flexible funding system that supports public health.

~~We~~ must base decisions on state and local level health indicators obtained through a reliable data collection and reporting system, while protecting the privacy of Texans.

~~We~~, the undersigned, dedicate ourselves to the cause of public health and to the community called Texas, and to its future. We urge our fellow Texans to join us in this vital mission.

— Public Health Improvement Steering Committee —

Texas Department of Health

Texas Health and Human Services Commission

Texas Education Agency

Health Disparities Task Force

Texas Environmental Health Association

Paso Del Norte Health Foundation

Texas Health Foundation

Preparedness Coordinating Council

Texas Medical Association Council on Public Health

Texas Institute for Health Policy Research

Texans Care for Children

Texas Alliance for Healthy Communities

Texas Nurses Association

Texas Association of Counties

Texas Public Health Association

Texas Association of Local Health Officials

Texas Public Health Training Center